DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 191 EA 021 397

AUTHOR Eiseman, Jeffrey W.; And Others
TITLE The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans. The School Improvement Leader: Four Perspectives on Change in Schools.
INSTITUTION Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast & Islands, Andover, MA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 89
CONTRACT 400-86-0005
NOTE 40p.; For related document, see ED 304 783.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast & Islands, 290 South Main Street, Andover, MA 01810 ($10.00 plus $2.50 shipping and handling).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrators; Decision Making; Educational Change; *Educational Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Leadership; Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Training; *Staff Development; *Teachers; *Team Training; Workshops

ABSTRACT

School improvement teams are assembled to share leadership responsibility with the principal. Differing from advisory councils in that they have more involvement in decision making, and differing from management teams in that they include role groups other than administrators, school improvement teams may be composed of teachers and the principal or of a variety of role groups, including students and community members. Typically, such leadership teams have been assembled for school improvement projects during the planning phase. Once the plan is developed, however, responsibility for its implementation tends to fall back upon the administrators. The purpose of these four modules is to prepare school improvement teams for the roles they should be playing throughout implementation. A specific aspect of effective leadership is covered in each module, including: (1) Coaching Secrets for School Leaders; (2) Lessons from the Business Literature; (3) The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans; and (4) Making Sure It Sticks: The School Improvement Leader's Role in Institutionalizing Change. The modules are designed to complement and built on one another, yet each can stand alone if a trainer wishes to focus on a single leadership aspect. This document is the third module and covers the following activities: (1) team formation; (2) team roles during implementation; (3) implementation dilemmas; and (4) constructing a school improvement agenda. Support materials including masters for flipcharts, overhead projection transparencies, or handouts are provided. (KM)

EA

ED320191

The School Improvement Leader

Four Perspectives on Change in Schools

The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans

Jeffrey W. Eiseman
Douglas S. Fleming
Leslie F. Hergert

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

David P. Crandall

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 021 397

The Regional Laboratory
for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands
Andover, Massachusetts 01810

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Acknowledgements

The module **The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans** was developed by Jeffrey W. Eiseman and Douglas S. Fleming with assistance from Leslie F. Hergert. In addition, Richard Ayers, Principal of the Gilford Middle-High School in Gilford, New Hampshire, and Deborah Roody of The NETWORK, Inc., offered invaluable insights.

Janet Angelis of The Regional Laboratory designed the format and assisted in the editing.

© Copyright 1989, **The Regional Laboratory.** All rights reserved.

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly, or in part, by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract number 400-86-0005. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department of Education, or any other agency of the United States Government.

Foreword

The School Improvement Leader: Four Perspectives on Change in Schools is a set of four training modules. They have been prepared by The Regional Laboratory for use by professionals responsible for enhancing the leadership skills of current and future educators. Each module covers a particular aspect of effective leadership. Topics include:

- Coaching Secrets for School Leaders
- Lessons from the Business Literature
- The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans
- Making Sure It Sticks: The School Improvement Leader's Role in Institutionalizing Change

The modules are designed to complement and build on one another, so there is a minimum amount of overlap between them. Yet each can stand alone if a trainer wishes to focus on a single aspect of leadership at any one time.

We've strived for a combination of theory and practice, so that workshop participants gain a data-based knowledge on which to build before they apply learnings. Each unit contains at least one brief reading that synthesizes the research on that topic. A master copy suitable for reproduction is provided for every module, and we recommend that participants be provided with copies of these readings either before, during, or at the conclusion of each unit.

It is anticipated that each module will take six to eight hours to complete—this might be in a full-day workshop, two half-day workshops, or a series of shorter sessions. We've provided a variety of support materials to accommodate trainers' various presentation/facilitation styles and time constraints. Support materials include masters that can be used to make flipcharts, overhead projection transparencies, or handouts. Trainers' instructions clearly guide but do not dictate any particular method of presentation.

Taken together or as individual professional development modules, the four research-based programs represent timely and useful frameworks for improving leadership for school improvement. They are intended for use with traditional school leaders as well as those who now share leadership at the district or building level—mentor teachers, master teachers, those sharing decision making, and anyone else playing a leadership role.

Contents

The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans

Introduction

Activity 1 Team Formation

Activity 2 Team Roles During Implementation

Activity 3 Implementation Dilemmas

Activity 4 Constructing a School Improvement Agenda

The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans

Module Purpose & Objectives

School improvement teams are groups assembled to share leadership responsibility with the principal. They differ from advisory councils in that they have more involvement in decision making. They differ from management teams in including role groups other than administrators; they may be composed of teachers and the principal or of a variety of role groups, including students and community members.

Typically, such leadership teams have been assembled for school improvement projects during the planning phase. Some states require that they be used to develop school improvement or staff development plans. And they are used often in the early stages of Effective Schools projects.

Yet, once the plan is developed, responsibility for its implementation tends fall back upon administrators. Either the team disbands, or its role becomes less clear. We believe that there are important functions for school improvement teams to play during the implementation phase of any new effort.

The purpose of this workshop is to prepare school improvement teams for the roles they should be playing throughout implementation. The module provides an overview of the knowledge and skills that will enable the teams to facilitate and monitor the implementation of their school improvement plans.

Participants will:

- Identify critical elements of establishing and maintaining a school improvement team
- Describe key roles played by members of school improvement teams during a school improvement effort
- Define common dilemmas faced by school improvement teams—both before and during implementation of school improvement efforts
- Construct a school improvement agenda for their own school or district

This training module is divided into four activities in addition to this introduction. For each activity the trainer will find instructions as well as master pages suitable for reproduction for overhead transparency projection, participant handouts, or transfer to newsprint or other large pad. In addition, there are several activities with masters for handouts that are meant to be used for small group activities or by individual participants.

The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast & Islands
290 South Main Street, Andover, Massachusetts 01810 (508) 470-0098

The following pages provide:

- Masters for overhead transparency of the workshop objectives
- Outline of the entire module
- A sample evaluation form for participants to complete at the close of the workshop
- A five-page reading that synthesizes the research on school improvement and school improvement teams

The materials in this packet are suitable for an all-day workshop, two half-days, or a series of shorter sessions. Two possible workshop designs are presented on the following page.

Two Possible Workshop Designs

I. For Teams Beginning Implementation (5 hours)

Activity 1 — Team Formation (1/2 hour)
- Review and discuss

Activity 2 — Team Roles (1 hour)
- Present key concepts
- Small group discussion
- Report out and summarize

Activity 3 — Implementation Dilemmas (1 1/2 hours)
- Groups of three present and discuss
- Groups of six present and discuss
- Large group discussion

Activity 4 — Constructing a School Improvement Agenda (2 hours)
- Teams read handout, add items
- Group reviews, all teams discuss
- Organize into interest groups
- Teams meet to identify issues/ideas to include in their planning
- Summarize

II. For Educators Interested in the Topic (4 1/2 hours)

Activity 1 — Team Formation (1 hour)
- Present key concepts
- Small group discussion
- Large group discussion—compare and list learnings

Activity 2 — Team Roles (1 hour)
- Present key concepts
- Small group discussion
- Report out and summarize

Activity 3 — Implementation Dilemmas (1 hour)
- Groups of three present and discuss
- Groups of six present and discuss
- Large group discussion

Activity 4 — Constructing a School Improvement Agenda (1 1/2 hours)
- Read handout in groups, add issues
- Discuss items broadly
- Summarize
- Identify two or three topics of interest and organize groups
- Summarize

Workshop Objectives

The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans

- To identify critical elements of establishing and maintaining a school improvement team.
- To describe key roles played by school improvement teams during a school improvement effort.
- To define dilemmas faced by school improvement teams—both before and during implementation of school improvement efforts.
- To construct a school improvement agenda for a school or district.

Module Outline

1. Team Formation

   - Team size
   - Team composition
   - Team authority
   - Time expectations
   - Team support needs

2. Team Roles

   - Champions
   - Context analyzers
   - Coordinators and communicators
   - Support providers
   - Implementation monitors

3. Implementation Dilemmas

   - Prior to implementation
   - During implementation

4. Constructing a School Improvement Agenda

   - Implementation phases
   - Team formation
   - Team roles
   - Resolving other planning decisions

The Role of Teams in Implementing School Improvement Plans

— Response Form —

We would appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire about this workshop. Your honest feedback helps us plan future programs.

1. In general, how would you rate this workshop?

Poor		So So		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

2. Was the information relevant to your needs?

Off the Mark		Somewhat		On Target
1	2	3	4	5

3. The organization and presentation of the sessions were:

Confusing		Okay		Clear
1	2	3	4	5

4. Through this workshop I gained: (please circle)

Practices Materials Programs Contacts Ideas

5. How do you intend to use what you've learned?

6. What was the best thing about the workshop? What was the least helpful?

7. Additional comments:

Thank you for your feedback.

Synthesis of Research on School Improvement and School Improvement Teams

Introduction

School improvement often breaks down just when enthusiasm and commitment to the improvement effort should be highest: the time when the school community is called upon to put a previously written plan into practice. Unfortunately, many school teams that have worked long and hard to produce a school improvement plan mistakenly think their job has been completed when the plan is written. Even in those schools where teachers (and others) have developed a sense of ownership of the plan, it will remain little more than a written document, resting in oblivion on a shelf in the administrator's office, unless someone or some group assumes responsibility for supporting its implementation.

The purpose of this paper is to provide background on

- the implementation process within the context of school improvement and
- the role a school team can assume to support that implementation.

Research on school improvement emphasizes that the implementation of school improvement plans should be viewed as a complex process. As Michael Fullan has argued:

> **Implementation or change in practice is not a thing, a set of materials, an announcement, or a delivery date, rather it is a process of learning and resocialization over a period of time involving people and relations among people in order to alter practice (Fullan, 1981 in Hopkins, 1986:88).**

Researchers such as Fullan (1982), Lieberman (1985), Hall & Loucks (1977), and Crandall et al. (1982) are critical of research that identifies effective practices or programs without detailing the variables and difficulties involved in putting them into place. They have called for a better understanding of "how to organize school improvement efforts that link both the realities of teaching with the realities of schools as organizations" (Lieberman, 1985:68).

The crucial task in the implementation of any type of school improvement plan is putting the plan into practice. The Rand Change Agent Study conducted in the mid-1970's highlighted ways that school improvement efforts go wrong. The authors argued that teachers and administrators had to be involved in both the formulation and implementation of school improvement plans if improvement efforts were to be successful (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978).

Recent research has discovered another dynamic at work in the school improvement process. The Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement, or DESSI Study (Crandall and Associates, 1982; Huberman and Miles, 1982), found that school improvement plans could be initiated by central office personnel and successfully implemented at sites without significant teacher involvement prior to implementation. Under certain circumstances teacher commitment to a new practice developed after implementation.

> **We found that with clear, direct leadership from building and central office administrators, training by a credible person in the use of a practice that was known to be effective, and continued support and assistance, teachers tried the new practice, mastered it, saw results with their students, and developed a strong sense of ownership (Crandall, 1983:6-7).**

Looking closely at sites where high levels of practice change had been attempted and achieved, the authors of the DESSI study concluded that successful implementation of school improvement plans could develop under "benevolently authoritarian forms of management." They encouraged administrators to resist diluting the size and scope of innovation:

> **The administrators who responded favorably and rapidly to the user's requests to make changes in the innovation often consented implicitly to a watering down of the project, and thereby to far more modest results. Those who held out for fidelity to the original model were sometimes initially cast in unpleasant authoritarian roles, but they were able, under certain conditions, to deliver more sizable results (Huberman and Miles, 1984:273).**

However, the DESSI study also emphasized the important role assistance played in all sites in securing substantial improvements in teacher practice. DESSI researchers found that teachers and administrators tended to underestimate the change in practice required by an innovation. Administrators were lulled into a false sense of confidence by observing the practice working elsewhere. Teachers postponed understanding the proposed innovation until they stepped into the classroom and tried to employ it. Swift and varied assistance proved essential in countering doubts about the innovation's effectiveness, doubts which occurred when problems were encountered. Continued attention offset teachers' feeling that they were not equal to the demands of the new practice and demonstrated that the administration was committed to making the new practice work.

Effective assistance usually occurred on-site, within the school, and was oriented to both the teacher and the innovation. It aimed to reassure and support the individual teacher and to increase his or her skill repertoire and mastery of the next practice (rather than focus on the ways in which the teacher had failed to implement the new practice).

More ambitious projects were generally found to require and receive more and more varied assistance. According to one analysis, these types of innovations "lived and died by the amount and quality of assistance that their users received once the change process was underway" (Huberman and Miles, 1984:273). Sites at which large-scale changes were being implemented set up inservice training sessions, visits to other sites to view the implementation at work, committee and support structures, and external conferences. They provided ongoing assistance in the form of materials, peer consultations, access to external consultants and specialists, and ready access to building and central office personnel.

The higher the level and variety of assistance at the site, the greater were teachers' feelings of competence and commitment to the innovation. High levels of assistance also had positive effects upon the school as an organization. While it did not assure smooth implementation, it did help resolve conflicts that arose during the implementation process and linked the innovation more strongly to the site. After the first year of implementation, high levels of assistance also led to higher student outcomes by ensuring that teachers achieved mastery of the innovation and practiced it in a consistent and accomplished manner.

Researchers have found varying time frames for implementation, ranging from six months for small-scale innovations to two years for large change-bearing innovations. Fullan has estimated that substantial changes in practice may take between three and five years to achieve.

The DESSI study found that after the first year to eighteen months of implementation, teachers shifted from concern about their ability to implement the innovation to concern about the innovation's future, about how they might refine it and make it more effective, and about the nature of the new practice's impact on student achievement. Teachers were now comfortable with the new practice, confident that they were capably implementing it, and gratified by its effects upon students.

But positive results in the classroom alone did not ensure continuation of the innovation. Several innovations were scuttled for budgetary and political reasons with little regard for the success of the implementation process itself. While teacher and administration support were crucial, the best indicators of continuation of an innovation were low environmental turbulence at the site and clear signs that the project was becoming routinized (i.e., having its own budget line, being acknowledged in personnel scheduling).

Implementation was smoother at sites where the innovation being implemented had been tried and "debugged" elsewhere. Sites that generated their own improvement projects faced rough implementation since substantial refinement was inevitable. In both cases, smooth early use of an innovation was not a good sign, since it usually meant that the scope of the innovation had been down-sized and its potential rewards diminished.

Regardless of the type of innovation undertaken, effective school improvement teams representing the important actors involved can significantly aid in the implementation of an innovation and offer a unique means of building trust between teachers and administration while engaging in the process of school improvement. Among the objectives of such teams are reducing teachers' suspicions and promoting accessibility. Their membership is multi-disciplinary, often including teachers, administrators, and other support staff. In some cases, parents and students also participate. Meetings are regularly scheduled and open to all who are interested.

Research has stressed that teachers and administrators who share the burden of implementation "confirm their emerging understanding of their approach, and make rising standards for their work attainable by them and their students" (Fullan, 1981 in Hopkins, 1986:93). School improvement teams also greatly enhance the flow of accurate information regarding implementation within the school. Their presence helps to reduce the number and impact of potentially detrimental rumors regarding the innovation and thus has an important impact upon the implementation environment.

Teams that include implementing teachers are particularly well suited for planning and carrying out inservice training during implementation. "That the presenter of the new practice is another teacher, implicitly sharing similar experiences and a common collegial bond with other teachers tends to increase credibility" (Crandall, 1983:9). Using inhouse teachers, as opposed to outsiders, to teach others about new practices "takes advantage of the craft nature of teaching ... that already exists, and helps develop conditions that are more acceptable to change" (Krueger and Parish, 1982:137).

The most effective teams function with no more than eight and no less than four regular members, have mutually understood ways of working together, and are able to articulate their goals clearly, without dissension. Its members believe that they are making a

contribution to the improvement of their school. They are supported by the building administration, but not dominated by it. The teams have a leadership structure, usually with a chairperson or facilitator.

Not all school improvement teams function this effectively. Often teams develop contradictory versions of how to work together. Conflicts flare, project goals are not clearly defined, and members' commitment to the improvement effort steadily diminishes. Kanter (1983) identifies several dilemmas of teamwork that grow out of four basic "inequalities":

- **The seductiveness of hierarchy.** Members of teams drawn from different role groups usually have different status outside the team. Thus, within the team, external status may be recreated causing higher status members to dominate, lower status members to drop out. Even when higher status members try to avoid taking over, lower status members may hold back or defer to others' opinions.

- **Participators are made, not born: the knowledge gap.** To participate effectively, people need a certain amount of knowledge and information. Members with more information on the topics being discussed have a distinct advantage.

- **Differential personal resources.** Members of teams have different personalities, styles of interacting in groups, and reputations outside the group. Friendships not only enable support of ideas within the group, but opportunities for further discussion outside the group.

- **The seniority/activity gap.** Newcomers to the group or members who miss meetings will often have trouble being accepted as "full" members.

Whereas ineffective teams become mired in conflict with team members blaming other members, students, or administrators for the project's difficulties, effective teams appear to make a transition in their outlook in the first year of implementation from what one analysis terms "blaming" to "enabling" behavior. The enabling outlook refocuses the team's efforts on the work of improvement itself and makes the team more effective in carrying out school improvement. It suggests that team members

> **...should regularly scrutinize their shared knowledge and ideas and then change them when necessary... [E]nablers look critically at the viewpoints and actions of others without criticizing or discrediting them personally (Maloy and Fischetti, 1985:166).**

Since it is now clear that the process of implementation is vital to the success of school improvement efforts, and that a team has an important role in this process, additional research is required to illuminate this role and to discover ways to maximize team effectiveness.

Selected References

Berman, Paul and McLaughlin, Milbrey. **Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change. Vol. VIII: Implementing and Sustaining Innovations.** Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1978.

Crandall, David P. "The Teacher's Role in School Improvement." **Educational Leadership** (November, 1983), 41:6-9.

Crandall, David P., and Associates. **People, Policies, and Practices: Examining the Chain of School Improvement.** Andover, MA: The NETWORK, Inc., 1982.

Fullan, Michael. "School Level Strategies." **The Elementary School Journal** (January, 1985), pp. 397-422.

Fullan, Michael. **The Meaning of Educational Change.** New York: Teachers College Press, 1982.

Hall, Gene and Loucks, Susan. "A Developmental Model for Determining Whether the Treatment is Actually Implemented." **American Educational Research Journal** (Summer, 1977), 14(3):263-276.

Hopkins, David. "The Change Process and Leadership in Schools." **School Organizations** (January-April, 1986), 6:81-100.

Huberman, A. Michael and Miles, Matthew B. **Innovation Up Close.** New York: Plenum Press, 1984.

Huberman, A. Michael and Miles, Matthew B. **Innovation Up Close: A Field Study in Twelve School Settings**. Andover, MA: The NETWORK, Inc., 1982.

Kanter, Rosabeth M. **The Change Masters.** New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

Krueger, Jack and Parish, Ralph. "We're Making the Same Mistakes: Myth and Legend in School Improvement." **Planning and Change** (Fall, 1982), 13:131-140.

Lieberman, Ann. "Is School Improvement Possible?" in **Excellence in Our Schools: Making It Happen.** New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1985, pp. 68-76.

Maloy, Robert W. and Fischetti, John C. "School Improvement Teams: A Qualitative Perspective." **Educational Horizons** (Summer, 1985), 63:164-168.

ACTIVITY 1

Team Formation

Some of the participants in the workshop session may be members of already established teams, others may have been assembled just to attend the training session. Urge all participants to regard their current arrangement as tentative. Stress that it may not be too late to add new members, to ask for more clarity regarding the team's scope and focus, etc. Announce that the purpose of this activity is to consider five critical issues related to team formation or reformation during the implementation stage.

Step 1. Project the overhead "**Team Formation.**" Summarize the following concepts related to selecting the appropriate size, composition, limits of authority, time expectations, and support needs of the implementation team.

Overhead

Team Formation

Team size

Team composition

Team authority

Time expectations

Team support needs

Step 2. Distribute the handout "**Team Formation.**"

Allow each of the groups who have come as teams to caucus briefly on the key points of team formation. If some individuals represent different schools or districts, arrange them into discussion groups of 6 to 8 persons.

Ask each team to prepare to introduce themselves using the five principles as an organizer.

Have each discussion group compare experiences in team formation and to

develop a list of "If I had known then what I know now" items that reflect what they would do in organizing future groups.

Step 3. Allow each team or discussion group to report out, in turn. Record their key comments on newsprint.

Step 4. Close this activity by stressing the importance of understanding the local context in team planning. Reinforce the idea that it may be necessary to reform the team for implementation purposes, because more or different hands will be needed to maintain a steady course.

Team Formation

Team size

Team composition

Team authority

Time expectations

Team support needs

Team Formation

In determining the makeup of any team, two considerations need to be balanced—efficiency (team size) and representativeness (team composition).

- **Team size.** The generally accepted rule of thumb is that working groups are most effective with five to seven members. A leadership group of three may be optimal at a time when many staff are spending extra time implementing new practices. On the other hand, a larger team is able to represent wider constituencies and more points of view. More than ten members tends to be unwieldy.

- **Team composition.** During implementation, the school improvement team should consider representativeness and needed competencies.

  Be sure to consider including the following on the school improvement team:

  - implementing teachers
  - administrator with responsibility for implementation (building or district)
  - experts in the program or content
  - opinion leaders among faculty
  - those receiving the benefits of the implementation—parents, students, or community members

  The team should draw its members from as many different groups as possible—formally defined groups as well as opinion groups—in order to insure that a wide spectrum of school staff will eventually experience a sense of ownership about the school improvement activity.

- **Team authority.** The team's authority and role need to be rechecked at the start of implementation. Team members need to be clear what decisions (if any) the team can make on its own and when it will prepare recommendations for others. It needs to be made clear:

  1. who the team reports to and what they will report
  2. which administrators will be making what decisions

  It is important to have either the team as a whole or a team leader meet with decision-making administrators to discover constraints that the team needs to work within. Those who act as liaisons need to ensure everyone knows, including those who miss team meetings, about guidelines and constraints.

- **Time expectations.** The team needs to be clear and explicit about how much time team membership is likely to consume. The number of meetings, length of meetings, and responsibility between meetings should be part of the agreement to participate. The amount of time needed will depend upon the nature of the school improvement activity, the degree of consensus among team members, the nature of implementation problems that arise, the phase of the implementation process underway, and the degree of initiative team members take. If there is a general rule, it is that both administrators and prospective team members are likely to underestimate the amount of time required to do the job well.

Agreements should be checked periodically to determine whether adjustments are needed. Failure to do this is a source of great frustration in many team efforts. Doing it keeps the project a living project.

- **Team support needs.** Team members not only appreciate praise for their efforts and recognition that their contribution is valued, they also need to have their jobs made easier. When possible, this should include released time from other obligations, arrangement of class schedules so that team members can meet during the school day, or extra compensation for meeting after school. Other kinds of support may include secretarial help and a budget for such items as assistance from a consultant, duplicating, and telephone. Team members should take the initiative to ensure that key administrators are aware of these and any other support needs.

ACTIVITY 2

Team Roles During Implementation

A school improvement team may play different roles during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a planned educational change. This activity focuses on the roles teams might play during the implementation stage.

Step 1. Distribute the handout to participants and project the overhead "Team Roles." Summarize the particular behaviors associated with each role.

Overhead

Team Roles

Champions

Context analyzers

Coordinators and communicators

Support providers

Implementation monitors

Step 2. Ask each participant to select the team role that she or he most often plays. Emphasize that this refers to the role a team member performs with the target audience or external group. Then ask participants to form role-alike groups, the champions together, the context analyzers together, etc. Try to have each role covered, even if you need to request that some participants select their second most likely role; a team may need to play all roles.

Once participants are settled into their role-alike groups, offer a school innovation to the entire group, e.g., teachers meeting in teams (by grade at the elementary level; by discipline at the secondary level) to develop ways to make the curriculum more student centered. Each group is to assume that they are members of the school's leadership team that is implementing the new practice—the new practice is that teams of teachers are meeting (the leadership team is not concerned with implementing the changes the teams

recommend). In their role-alike groups, they are to discuss how the leadership team should play out the role of implementation monitor, support provider, etc.

Among the items each group should discuss are:

- What resources will the leadership team need?
- What will the team actually do in this role?
- Under what conditions do they think this role is needed?

Step 3: Ask each group to report out the most salient parts of their discussion. Perhaps the most valuable part of this discussion, and the one that the trainer might wish to emphasize during the group report out, is the question of under what circumstances a particular role is needed to implement a new practice.

Step 4. Ask participants if any other team roles were identified during their discussion. They might also reflect on team roles they have seen other groups play during the **implementation** phase of a school improvement effort. Ask them to volunteer the following kind of information:

- other "categories" or "terms" they add to roles not described in the handout
- specific examples of how teams might serve in these roles

Anticipated responses might include:

Decision recommenders	teams who can size up an idea and help promote it with persons whose support you need
Mobilizers	teams who have the authority or ability to set things in motion by setting schedules, coordinating resources
Troubleshooters	teams who are adept at spotting problems and detecting weaknesses in proposals
Resource linkers	teams who are well connected to information, products, or sources of outside assistance
Personal influencers	teams whose social connections or status allow them to move comfortably among key persons whose support you need

Step 5. Poll the group by asking participants to raise their hands if their teams have played the role of "champion," "context analyzer," "communicator," etc.

Does there seem to be an even distribution of experience in these team roles or does one role seem to be less utilized by teams in your audience? You may want to explore with the group reasons why a particular role does not seem to be enacted.

Step 6. Close the activity by stressing the importance of flexibility, diversity, and strategy in group action. Encourage the teams present to think more deliberately about the balance of tasks and responsibilities on their teams.

Team Roles

Champions

Context analyzers

Coordinators and communicators

Support providers

Implementation monitors

Team Roles

- **Champions.** The leadership team serves as an advocate for the proposed school improvement activity. While recognizing the costs involved in implementing the plan, they believe in and work toward achieving its benefits. Excitement can be contagious; champions make it their business to excite others. They mobilize others to support and join in the implementation of the school improvement plan.

- **Context analyzers.** The team must understand and plan around the local context—including district priorities, local politics, opportunities, and constraints. If it ignores the existing context, the school improvement plan may not get off the ground. The local context includes:

  - faculty morale, life circumstances, community relations
  - district priorities, other innovations, budget, and staffing changes
  - political events and pressures, such as school board elections, union actions, new legislation

- **Coordinators and communicators.** At least three kinds of coordination are required:

  - coordination among those involved in implementing the school improvement activity
  - coordination between implementors and others
  - coordination between the building and the district

  Coordination involves ensuring that the right hand knows what the left hand is doing. It also means ensuring that the right hand doesn't interfere with what the left hand is doing. At still another level, it means that the right and left hands actively cooperate—sharing resources, collaborating to solve common problems, etc.

- **Support providers.** Participants and administrators need many kinds of support:

  - logistical support—materials, equipment, scheduling, procedures, room arrangements
  - psychological support—encouragement, affirmation, acceptance of early awkwardness and frustrations
  - instructional support—assistance in developing key skills and incorporating them, follow-up application

  Sometimes, the leadership team needs to provide the support directly; other times, its members can merely ensure that someone is providing it. The team should develop ways to hear and deal with individual and shared problems. Trouble shooting and problem solving are important parts of providing support.

- **Implementation monitors.** The principal, project director, or project evaluator may have formal responsibility for monitoring implementation. But the leadership team shares responsibility for ensuring that each phase and aspect of the implementation plan is happening on schedule and that deviations from the initial or revised plan make sense given what has already occurred and what has so far been learned. In order to carry out such a monitoring role, the plan needs to be broken down into phases and components, and data gathering procedures need to be devised and implemented. If the team will not be devising and implementing these procedures itself, it should be overseeing those who will be doing so.

ACTIVITY 3

Implementation Dilemmas

It is important to point out that participants may be members of teams that were established after key decisions had already been reached regarding the nature of the school improvement activity. Urge them to consider these decisions as being "still under review" and that it is not too late to change them in the light of insights gained from recent experience and/or this activity.

Step 1. For this activity, we recommend that workshop leaders use a small group presentation option, organizing participants into groups of three.

Announce that the groups will be working on pre-implementation dilemmas typically faced by school improvement teams. Distribute a set of three cards to each group; on each card is one of the pre-implementation dilemmas listed in the handout "**Pre-Implementation Dilemmas.**" Ask each person to take a card and be responsible for explaining the concept on his or her card to other members of the group.

Distribute the handout "**Pre-Implementation Dilemmas,**" and project the overhead for the groups to see.

Overhead 1

Pre-Implementation Dilemmas

Modest change vs. major change

Locally developed practice vs. one developed elsewhere

Implementation of a single new practice vs. taking a step toward long-term school improvement activity

Orally, or on a sheet of newsprint, you may provide the following instructions:

1. take time to review the concept individually

2. provide a concrete example from your own experience, if possible
3. summarize the concept and "teach it" to your fellow group members in turn

Monitor the group on this task. You may need to remind them to provide examples. Explain that the three dilemmas that are examined during this activity are interrelated and that each should be fully explored before final decisions are made regarding any of them.

Step 2. During implementation of a school improvement activity, several other dilemmas must be faced. Announce that each group of three should now join another group of three to form an expanded discussion group of six.

Tell them that they will now discuss implementation dilemmas typically faced by school improvement teams. Distribute to each group a set of six cards, each card naming one of the implementation dilemmas listed on the overhead **"Implementation Dilemmas."** Again, each person takes a card and is responsible for reviewing and explaining the concept to other members of the group. This activity will take longer than the previous one, but can be accomplished using the same directions.

The concepts do not have to be presented in any given order. You may project the overhead **"Implementation Dilemmas,"** and distribute the handout of the same title.

Overhead 2

Implementation Dilemmas

Special status vs. regular placement

Replication vs. adaptation

Piecemeal implementation vs. integrated implementation

Inside leader vs. outside leader

"Front end" leader vs. "back end" leader

Volunteer implementors vs. conscripted implementors

Step 3. Use the overhead projections to review the pre-implementation and implementation dilemmas discussed in the small groups.

Now might be a good time to welcome questions, comments, or concerns with the whole group.

Step 4. Conclude the activity by reminding participants that these concepts will be revisited in Activity 4.

Pre-Implementation Dilemmas

Modest change vs. major change

Locally developed practice vs. one developed elsewhere

Implementation of a single new practice vs. taking a step toward long-term school improvement activity

Implementation Dilemmas

Special status vs. regular placement

Replication vs. adaptation

Piecemeal implementation vs. integrated implementation

Inside leader vs. outside leader

"Front end" leader vs. "back end" leader

Volunteer implementors vs. conscripted implementors

Pre-Implementation Dilemmas

- **Modest change vs. major change.** The larger the scope and personal "demandingness" of a change—the more the activity requires additional people, new organizational arrangements, and new behaviors—the greater the likelihood of "success." The greater the teacher effort and energy expended in implementing a new practice, the greater the benefits. Schools or districts sometimes "overreach"—they attempt to implement plans that are beyond their ability to carry out given their existing structures, resources, and internal climates. Large implementation efforts also run the risk that they will be distorted and only partially institutionalized while incurring substantial human and financial costs. On the other hand, small innovations may not be institutionalized because they are not perceived as worth the effort.

  Should your school or district consider an alternative plan that has a larger or smaller scope?

- **Locally developed practice vs. one developed elsewhere.** It is not necessarily true that locally developed innovations will work best because they are more likely to fit the local context and gain commitment on the part of leaders and implementors. An innovation's birthplace is essentially irrelevant. "Foreign" is not an important factor as both imported and locally developed innovations can be successfully implemented. One major predictor of successful implementation is the extent of local **discussion.** Discussion builds commitment because it represents an investment of group effort, and because the ideas are reformulated during the process. Outside ideas become inside ideas through this processes. One major hazard of using locally developed practices (compared to "validated" successful practices developed elsewhere) is that they might not be adequately "debugged."

  Has your school or district considered adopting a practice or program that was developed somewhere else?

- **Implementation of a single new practice vs. taking a step toward long-term school improvement activity.** The question asked here is whether the school improvement activity is seen as the implementation of a specific practice (which can include one that has many components) or as part of an ongoing improvement effort, for example, long-term staff development activity. Some educators believe that it is important to induce teachers and administrators to think about educational issues in a concrete and focused way and to try new approaches. If a school improvement effort is based upon this premise, the nature of the specific practice focused upon is not crucial (although not irrelevant). The advantage of this approach is that with constantly changing social conditions and student populations, an approach or activity that is effective this year may not be effective five years from now. Teachers who grapple with new ideas avoid stagnation. There are two disadvantages of this approach. First, school improvement activity that is conceptualized as staff or organization development is often so abstract and disconnected to the classroom that student learning is not affected. Second, because significant changes usually require 18 months to three years of sustained effort the staff development route may provide for too many efforts at once or too close together, thereby diffusing attention and exhausting personnel.

  What is the strategic fit or relationship between components of your school or district improvement effort and its overall mission or long-range goals?

Implementation Dilemmas

- **Special status vs. regular placement.** Should the improvement effort be housed in a special programs unit with special status and high visibility or within the unit that comes closest to its area of activity?

  Advantages of giving it special status are that special status:
  1. demonstrates the district's or school's commitment to its success
  2. protects it against early dilution
  3. allows project staff to experiment, free from some of the routines and red tape that encumber established units

  Advantages of "regular" placement are that it:
  1. provides opportunities for support, expertise, knowledge, and resources that can enhance its capabilities
  2. provides opportunities for the project to contribute to the unit's related ongoing activities
  3. promotes the kinds of interpersonal networking that are likely to facilitate the project's integration with other activities
  4. increases the likelihood that, if successful, its major elements will be both continued and spread to others.

- **Replication vs. adaptation.** If the practice being implemented is either untested or somewhat diffuse, then it may not be implemented successfully unless "mutual adaptation" occurs. Mutual adaptation occurs when users and the practice change during the process. Well designed practices (both focused and debugged **and** technically challenging) are unlikely to achieve the effects that have been obtained by the developers if technically challenging parts are omitted. In doing so, the key to success may also be eliminated. Replicated practices must be faithfully implemented in order to achieve success. In schools or districts where a new practice is piloted, administrators need to provide teachers with special attention and support, since these teachers typically do not receive training from the original developer or "certified trainers" after the initial orientation.

- **Piecemeal implementation vs. integrated implementation.** The greater the number of "no's" to the questions below, the more it makes sense to implement a complex multi-faceted practice in phases (only a few components at a time) as opposed to all at once:

  1. Is the size of the change for individual users reasonably small?
  2. Are potential users reasonably receptive to adopting the practice?
  3. Do potential users possess the requisite knowledge and skills?
  4. Is the change reasonably congruent with the prevailing culture?
  5. Is the district free from crises and competing innovations?
  6. Are the requisite facilities, equipment, materials, etc., available?
  7. Is faculty turnover low?

- **Inside leader vs. outside leader.** Should the person responsible for providing the primary leadership for the change effort come from within the district? Outside assistors or consultants with specialized expertise may make the program "work better," as they are likely to be freer from entangling alliances and may bring additional

skills and a fresh point of view. Selection of an outside person itself may cause strains, either because the newcomer fails to grasp the unwritten rules and culture, or because old timers may operate under the assumption that both the new person and the program are likely to be transient. The combination of newness to the system and the stress of implementing a new program may make it difficult for an outsider or consultant to develop adequate sensitivity to the sources of support for and resistance to adopting and continuing the practice.

- **"Front end" leader vs. "back end" leader.** Should the person responsible for providing the major leadership for the change effort be chosen primarily for "front end" (e.g., inspirational) or for "back end" (e.g., operational and political) strengths? While an inspirational leader may succeed in mobilizing teachers to work at developing the skills necessary to achieve a successful implementation, a leader with operational and political strengths may succeed in creating formal and informal support for institutionalizing the practice. Few individuals combine these skills. Examine both the practice your school or district has in mind and the school or district itself to determine which kind of leader will be more important. The leadership team needs to take special steps to compensate for whatever skills the formally designated leader lacks.

- **Volunteer implementors vs. conscripted implementors.** Should the first wave of early adopters be solely those who volunteer or should it include teachers who are selected on some other basis? For certain practices—for example, those practices that can only be implemented across-the-board, there is no real question, or the question might be which building or team volunteers, not which teachers. But for others, it is a real question. There is an important trade-off: if volunteers alone become involved with the school improvement effort, initial implementation will be easier but later dissemination may be more difficult. In contrast, if the first wave involves some reluctant teachers, then the initial implementation is likely to be more difficult, but if the experience of these initially reluctant teachers is positive, it will make it far easier to involve other reluctant teachers later. The issue becomes "Should we put up with the problem of involving reluctant teachers now or should we postpone it until later?" The answer should depend upon how difficult or complex the practice is, how strong its track record has been to date, the extent of concern or resistance, and the quality of the relationships between administrators and teachers. If the success of the first wave is in jeopardy, play it safe—go with volunteers.

ACTIVITY 4

Constructing a School Improvement Agenda

The previous activities have outlined key decisions regarding formation of the implementation team, team roles during the implementation process, and implementation dilemmas that research on school change reveals to be typical and recurring. There are, however, additional implementation decisions that do not fit into an "either/or" format. During this activity, participants will apply the concepts and principles of this workshop.

Step 1. Ask participants to organize into school or district-level "teams." Participants who represent individual districts or other organizations may work individually and compare results in small discussion groups.

Step 2. Distribute the handout **"Constructing a School Improvement Agenda."**

Step 3. Identify the five sections of the participant handout.

I. Anticipating the Stages of Planned Educational Change
II. Forming the Implementation Team
III. Roles of the Implementation Team
IV. Resolving Implementation Dilemmas
V. Other Planning Decisions

Step 4. Ask participants to review the handout and answer for their team the first part (A) of each section. Record those items of most concern to their teams on sheets of newsprint that have been placed around the room.

Step 5. When most of the groups have completed the assigned task, review the lists of additional items identified under each section. This review may stimulate additional thinking in other teams.

Step 6. (Optional if time permits) Invite participants to spend additional time in cross-team discussion groups comparing potential approaches to selected **agenda items.**

Explain that you want persons to form the "seeds" or nucleus of task-centered interest groups. Ask for volunteers to identify the item they want

to work on the most. The item could be related to one of the dilemmas already presented or something else that surfaced during the workshop.

Record the proposed interest group items on newsprint. When four or five interest groups have been identified call for a show of hands to determine the rough number of discussants for each group. If some of the groups are too large, divide them into smaller groups. If a group is too small, ask if the persons want to remain as a small group or would prefer to join another group. Allow approximately 20 minutes for discussion.

This step might be repeated to provide everyone with a chance to work in more than one interest group.

Step 7. Close this activity (and the workshop) by summarizing the major points to consider in implementing school improvement plans. You may wish to highlight important points reinforced by participants themselves, and urge attendees to follow through on the use of the school improvement agenda that they have created.

In your summary you may wish to remind participants of why they came—successful implementation of school improvement plans requires support and facilitation that research and experience show is done well with teams. The activities of this workshop have looked at:

- some of the issues involved in forming teams
- different roles teams play
- implementation dilemmas teams need to be aware of
- planning a school improvement effort

Basically, we've looked at the outer workings as opposed to the inner workings of teams.

Reviewing and projecting the Workshop Objectives from the introduction is another way to summarize. An evaluation form was also included in the introductory materials.

Constructing a School Improvement Agenda

I. Anticipating the Stages of Planned Educational Change

A. Check the items that do not reflect a shared understanding or "common vocabulary" in your school or district. Add additional items as needed.

Planning

_____ Deciding to start
_____ Announcing the project
_____ Assessing needs
_____ Securing commitment
_____ Setting goals and priorities

Implementing

_____ Continuing support
_____ Finding the time
_____ Coordinating the resources
_____ Overcoming obstacles
_____ Developing new skills

Evaluating

_____ Determining impact
_____ Responding to changes
_____ Connecting to other efforts
_____ Celebrating success
_____ Learning from losses

B. Develop a plan of action to acquaint other members of your school or district with the terms you've checked off above.

Action Step(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline

C. List resources or assistance that will be needed to do the job.

II. Forming the Implementation Team

A. Check the items that have not been adequately explored or resolved in your school or district.

_____ 1. Size of the implementation team
_____ 2. Composition of the implementation team
_____ 3. Authority of the implementation team
_____ 4. Time expectations
_____ 5. Team support needs

B. Develop a plan of action to resolve these issues in your school or district.

Action Step(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline

C. List resources or assistance that will be needed to do the job.

III. Roles of the Implementation Team

A. Check the items that represent roles your implementation team has needed to play but has not fulfilled. Add additional items as needed.

_____ 1. Champions
_____ 2. Context analyzers
_____ 3. Coordinators and communicators
_____ 4. Support providers
_____ 5. Implementation monitors
_____ 6. Mobilizers
_____ 7. Personal influencers
_____ 8. Decision recommenders
_____ 9. Trouble shooters
_____ 10. Resource linkers

B. Develop a plan of action to begin to play these roles.

Action Step(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline

C. List resources or assistance that will be needed to do the job.

IV. Resolving Implementation Dilemmas

A. Check the items that do not reflect a shared understanding or clear position in your school or district. Add other items as needed.

Pre-Implementation Issues

_____ 1. Modest versus major changes
_____ 2. Locally developed practices versus ones developed elsewhere
_____ 3. Single practice versus long-term improvement focus

Implementation Issues

_____ 4. Special status versus regular placement
_____ 5. Replication versus adaptation
_____ 6. Piecemeal versus integrated
_____ 7. Inside leader versus outside leader
_____ 8. Front end leadership versus back end leadership
_____ 9. Voluntary versus conscripted implementors

B. Develop a plan of action to resolve these issues in your school or district.

Action Step(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline

C. List resources or assistance that will be needed to do the job.

V. Other Planning Decisions

A. Check the items that have not been explored by your team. Add other items as needed.

_____ 1. What steps should be taken to develop effective working procedures and mutual trust among members?

_____ 2. What information and skills do team members need to carry out the proposed plan of work assigned to them?

_____ 3. What kinds of incentives are being offered to attract and retain teacher involvement?
- _____ growth opportunities
- _____ recognition
- _____ financial

_____ 4. What support mechanisms will best meet teacher needs?
- _____ training
- _____ resource materials
- _____ time

____ 5. What linkage to district-level and community support is required?
- ____ social
- ____ logistical
- ____ political
- ____ administrative

____ 6. What kinds of data can be collected to assess whether the planned change is working or whether problems exist?
- ____ quantitative
- ____ qualitative
- ____ time
- ____ cost

B. Develop a plan of action for these items.

Action Step(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline

C. List resources or assistance that will be needed to do the job.